Introduction to JROTC Programs

Chapter Outline

LESSON 1
Organization of the JROTC

LESSON 2
The Military Uniform and Appearance Standards

LESSON 3
Customs and Courtesies for Junior ROTC

LESSON 4
Attitude, Discipline, and Respect

LESSON 5
Ethics, Values, and Morals

LESSON 6
Social Etiquette and Dining-In, Dining-Out

"Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

President John F. Kennedy
Organizations of the JROTC

Quick Write

Describe two things that you have done that have helped you become a better citizen, and have helped prepare you for success in life and service to others.

Reflections of a Recent AFJROTC Cadet

"Being involved in AFJROTC made high school so much fun and enjoyable for me. It’s interesting to look back at myself in 9th grade and see how much I’ve changed, grown, and developed after graduating—all because of joining JROTC."

Lindsey Clem, freshman Air Force ROTC cadet at West Virginia University

Learn About

- the history of the nation’s Junior ROTC programs
- the organization of Junior ROTC programs
- the lines of responsibility and authority in Junior ROTC programs

CHAPTER 1 Introduction to JROTC Programs
proud of. I love the person that I am, and AFJROTC taught me to always strive to be better than the person you were yesterday.

I’m now a freshman Air Force ROTC cadet at West Virginia University Detachment 915, majoring in Criminology. Because of my major, I didn’t get a scholarship right out of high school. However, taking AFROTC as an elective at college and working towards an in-college AFROTC scholarship is a great way to go.

On one of my first days in AFROTC at college, they sat us down and said “Look at the person to your right and look at the person to your left. These people will more than likely become your best friends over the course of the next four to five years.” When I heard that, my mind automatically went back to high school because my best friends were people I was in AFJROTC with.

Lindsey Clem is a recent Air Force JROTC cadet, now attending West Virginia University.  
Courtesy of Lindsey Clem
The History of the Nation’s Junior ROTC Programs

As a cadet in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC), you are part of an honored national tradition. You are among those valued young people who are being prepared to be tomorrow’s leaders. By joining JROTC, you will gain tremendous insight into a citizenship program that will give you a unique educational experience. It will also make you aware of your rights, duties, and privileges as a citizen.

Through JROTC, you will develop self-discipline and self-confidence. The leadership skills you learn will allow you to meet the challenges of adulthood successfully. Your instructors will be experienced retired officers or enlisted personnel from the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

Today’s JROTC has evolved and grown over almost 200 years. As the timeline shows, the concept of building citizenship, character, and service to our nation and communities evolved first at colleges, and then at high schools, into today’s JROTC programs.

Important Events in the Growth of the Junior ROTC

1820  **Norwich, Vermont. First purely technical and military school** in the United States for training students in citizen soldiery, named the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy. Today, it is known as Norwich University. The school still combines military and civilian studies to produce educated citizens.

*Founder*: Army Captain Alden Partridge.

*Goal*: To educate students in both academic subjects and the art of war.

1911  **Cheyenne, Wyoming. First JROTC program**, established as a merger of high school education with noncompulsory military training.

*Founder*: Army Lieutenant Edgar R. Steevers, first to organize a JROTC program, who believed that military training could help create better citizens.

*Goal*: To teach young men the advantages of a strong body and a clean mind, self-control and restraint, and civic duties and responsibilities.


*Goal*: To authorize a junior course for non-college military schools, high schools, and non-preparatory schools.

1917  **Leavenworth, Kansas. The first officially established JROTC unit** under the 1916 National Defense Act is organized at Leavenworth High School.

1964  **The Reserve Officer Training Corps Vitalization Act** allows JROTC to be expanded to all branches of the military.

*Goal*: To direct the secretaries of each military branch to establish and maintain JROTC units at public and private secondary schools across the nation.
The 1964 ROTC Vitalization Act set the national criteria for schools to begin JROTC programs. It established goals and policies based on earlier successes at individual schools. It focused especially on building good citizenship. The basic requirement was that schools applying for a JROTC program had to agree to provide at least three years of military-supported instruction. For a program to be approved, the law required a minimum enrollment of 100 physically fit students, or 10 percent of the student body, whichever was less.

Since then, the military services have applied some of their own criteria to meet the needs of different high schools and their students. Generally, schools interested in a JROTC program must apply and meet criteria set by each military service. Schools are chosen to ensure fair and equitable coverage nationwide. Students must be US citizens and enrolled in the ninth grade or higher. The law also authorizes the services to provide equipment and uniforms.

The Organization of Junior ROTC Programs

All JROTC programs develop cadets’ citizenship, character, leadership traits, and responsibility. Cadets participate in community service, drill and ceremonies, and traditional educational programs. They have uniform inspections. They study military history and customs, and take part in fitness training. Today, more than 3,000 high schools nationwide and overseas offer Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard JROTC classes. All JROTC instructors are certified by their training commands. They serve as teachers and mentors to the young cadets.

While in the program, you will learn a wide range of life skills for success in school, work, and family. You will participate in social events, drill competition, field trips, and other special activities. You will wear the uniform as directed by your service instructor. Most importantly, you will learn to be a productive and valued citizen in your community.

JROTC Programs—By Service

Below are summaries of the individual JROTC programs. Each program offers an academically sound curriculum combined with extracurricular activities suited to the culture of each service.

Air Force JROTC (AFJROTC)

Mission. To develop citizens of character dedicated to serving their nation and communities.

History. The AFJROTC began in 1966 with just 20 units. It has since grown to almost 900 units worldwide. More than 120,000 cadets are now enrolled in the program, taught and mentored by some 1,900 instructors.
In the beginning, only young men were allowed as cadets. However, that changed in 1972 when young women were allowed to enroll in the program. Since then, the number of women in AFJROTC has increased dramatically, from 9 percent to over 40 percent of the cadet corps.

**Objectives.** The objectives of the AFJROTC are to:

- Educate and prepare high school cadets in citizenship and life skills
- Promote community service
- Instill a sense of responsibility
- Develop character and self-discipline through education and instruction in air and space fundamentals—supporting the Air Force’s core values of “Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do”

The overall goals of AFJROTC are to instill the values of citizenship, service to the United States, personal responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment.

**Curriculum.** The AFJROTC’s curriculum is a three- or four-year program offered to high school students in grades 9–12. The curriculum includes aerospace science, leadership education, and wellness components.

While focusing on the practice of good citizenship and service to the community and nation, AFJROTC cadets can attend the most advanced courses in aerospace science in high schools today. Subjects include aviation history, the science of flight, and exploring space. Also covered are development of aerospace power, aerospace vehicles, rocketry, space programs, space technology, and the aerospace industry.

Leadership education includes Air Force heritage and traditions, military customs and courtesies, civics and citizenship, and the principles of management.

Students also cover a wide variety of practical subjects. These include study skills, personal responsibility, communication, individual and group behavior, and management. Health and fitness courses include first aid, wellness, and principles for healthy living. Lessons in personal financial literacy, college and career planning, and human relations help prepare cadets for life after high school.

**Instructors.** All AFJROTC instructors are retired Air Force commissioned and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). They serve as full-time employees of the host school. The Senior Aerospace Science Instructor (SASI) both teaches and has overall responsibility for the AFJROTC program at a school. The Aerospace Science Instructor (ASI) works for the SASI and teaches leadership education, for the most part. Both are trained in the latest instructional techniques and technologies through the AFJROTC Initial Instructor Course. The SASI and ASI supervise, teach, mentor, coach, and motivate cadets in all their courses and other activities.
Army JROTC (AJROTC)

**Mission.** To motivate young people to be better citizens.

**History.** The AJROTC came into being in 1916. Six units in high schools started operating with military equipment loaned from the federal government. Active duty soldiers were instructors. In 1964, the ROTC Vitalization Act opened JROTC up to the other services and replaced most of the active duty instructors with retirees who work for and are cost-shared by the schools.

AJROTC has evolved over the years into a character and leadership development program. It emphasizes citizenship, personal responsibility, lifelong learning, and individual success. AJROTC today has programs in 1,731 schools. Units are in every state in the nation and in American schools overseas. Cadet numbers have grown to 300,000. A minimum of 100 cadets, or 10 percent of the school's students in grades 9–12, are organized into a chain of command that makes up an AJROTC unit.

**Objectives.** The AJROTC program is designed to:

- Promote citizenship
- Develop leadership
- Develop critical and creative thinking skills
- Improve communications skills
- Improve health and physical fitness
- Strengthen positive self-motivation
- Provide a global awareness, including a historical perspective of military service
- Facilitate high school graduation

AJROTC cadets train to work as team members with common goals. The program encourages students to seek higher learning and to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math.

**Curriculum.** The AJROTC core curriculum is divided into six major units: citizenship; leadership theory and application; foundation for success; wellness, fitness, and first aid; geography, map skills, and environmental awareness; and civics. These courses help prepare young men and women for adulthood and supplement what they learn in their regular high school classes.

In addition, students develop work and personal finance skills, and learn how to be strong writers and communicators.
The AJROTC curriculum is based on national standards, including performance-based, learner-centered education. Every classroom is equipped with leading edge technologies to teach, assess, and report student progress. Teachers are trained to use the technologies to develop students’ academic, social, and emotional skills.

AJROTC learning extends beyond the classroom to include opportunities to solve problems that matter to cadets in their school, community, or society at large. Each lesson typically requires cadets to:

- Make a decision
- Perform a skill
- Solve a problem
- Create a product

Instructors. There are approximately 4,000 instructors in AJROTC classrooms. Two instructors, usually one retired officer and one noncommissioned officer, teach the curriculum. The Senior Army Instructor (SAI) is the officer in charge of the AJROTC Program. An NCO serves as the Army Instructor (AI). The SAI and/or AI supervise, mentor, coach, and motivate cadets in all their activities. Besides having state-of-the-art instructional techniques, AJROTC instructors serve as role models for maturing teenagers.

**Navy JROTC (NJROTC)**

Mission. To instill in students the value of citizenship, service to the nation, personal responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment.

History. The Navy’s first JROTC programs began in 1966. There are now almost 600 programs nationwide. There are more than 89,000 students enrolled, about 40 percent of them women. The NJROTC program is directed by the Naval Service Training Command, Citizenship Development Department, headquartered at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida.

Objectives. The NJROTC seeks to:

- Promote patriotism
- Develop informed and responsible citizens
- Promote habits of orderliness and precision
- Develop a high degree of personal honor, self-reliance, individual discipline, and leadership
• Promote an understanding of the basic elements of and need for national security
• Develop respect for and an understanding of the need for authority in a democratic society
• Promote community service
• Provide incentives to live healthy and drug free
• Develop leadership potential
• Provide an alternative to destructive behavior and activities, such as gang involvement
• Promote high school completion
• Promote continuing education
• Provide information on the military services as a possible career

NJROTC emphasizes staying in school, graduating, and becoming responsible citizens. Cadets are urged to consider higher education, and to take part in community service. Other goals include promoting patriotism and understanding the need for national security.

Curriculum. The NJROTC’s curriculum emphasizes developing citizenship and leadership. Leadership courses include theory and practice. An NJROTC unit is run by the cadets as a leadership laboratory where cadets rotate positions of leadership to accomplish a mission as a team.

There are Navy-specific courses in maritime heritage and naval history, as well as a look into military and international law, the significance of sea power, and fundamentals of naval operations. Cadets learn basic seamanship, navigation, shipboard organization, and weapons systems. They learn about the sciences that affect the naval service. These include meteorology, oceanography, astronomy, fundamentals of flight, radar, sound propagation in water, and electronics.

Cadets participate throughout the year in many hours of community service. There are also air rifle, academic, athletic, drill, and orienteering competitions. Cadets visit naval bases and engage in other activities. They also practice marksmanship and train in physical fitness. They also conduct close order drill, color guard, and parade ceremonies during school and community events.

Instructors. The almost 1,300 instructors in NJROTC are retired officers and NCOs. They come from the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. The officer who is the head of a high school NJROTC program is called the Senior Naval Science Instructor (SNSI). They are assisted by Naval Science Instructors (NSIs) who are normally senior enlisted first class or chief petty officers (E-6 through E-9) or their equivalents in the Marine Corps. They assist the SNSI in carrying out all facets of the program.
**Marine Corps JROTC (MCJROTC)**

**Mission.** The MCJROTC Program’s intent is to develop character in high school students—allowing them to become informed citizens prepared to willingly accept their responsibilities as citizens. The program stresses the learning of leadership skills that will enhance the lives of the young adults who participate.

**History.** The Marine Corps JROTC program began in 1964 after the ROTC Revitalization Act was signed into law.

**Objectives.** The Marine Corps Junior ROTC program develops:
- Informed and responsible citizens
- Leadership skills
- Strong moral character

The program also promotes an understanding of the need for national security. It instills a sense of pride and personal discipline. It also emphasizes respect for authority.

**Curriculum.** The MJROTC curriculum covers five categories. They include:
- Leadership
- Citizenship
- Personal growth
- Public service and careers
- General military subjects

Cadet character development focuses on discipline, loyalty, and a sense of responsibility.

The curriculum progresses by year, with cadets being introduced first to leadership and citizenship. They also learn techniques of personal growth and responsibility. There is an introduction to military structure and tradition.

Cadets later move into the study of general military subjects, including marksmanship and land navigation using maps and compasses.

As cadets advance, they apply their leadership training in positions of increased authority and responsibility. They also learn skills for life beyond high school, including personal finances.

Senior cadets conduct formations and inspections, as well as supervise training events with younger cadets. Seniors also conduct research projects.
Instructors. Retired Marine officers serve as Senior Marine Instructors (SMIs). Retired NCOs serve as Marine Instructors. The senior instructors serve as regular faculty members. They have the same responsibilities as department heads. Marine Instructors are also faculty members. They work for the Senior Marine Instructor. They work with the SMI, other school officials, and faculty members. Both work with community leaders and parents to keep making improvements in the program.

US Coast Guard Junior Leadership Program (USCGJLP)

History and Mission. The US Coast Guard is the newest of the programs, and is modeled after those of the other military services. The US Coast Guard JLP operates out of two high schools in Florida and North Carolina. They are overseen by the Office of Inclusion and Diversity at the US Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

The first US Coast Guard JLP was created in 1989. It is located at the Maritime and Science Technology Academy (MAST) in Miami, Florida. MAST has about 500 students. Of those, about 160 students are enrolled in the US Coast Guard JLP program. MAST is competitive, focusing on academic success, career preparation, and appreciation of the sea and the environment. MAST started as a trade school, but has become a nationally recognized high school.

The newest US Coast Guard JLP unit is in Camden County, North Carolina. It was created in 2010. The Camden County High School Junior Leadership Program (JLP) lasts two semesters; each participating student takes JLP classes for one semester per school year. During their off semesters, students participate in physical training, drill, and other program-related activities.

Objectives and Curriculum. Both programs’ objectives include instruction and experiences that develop leadership, teamwork, personal responsibility, self-confidence, and devotion to school, community, and country. Through living by the Coast Guard’s core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty, cadets learn how to be better students and citizens who proudly represent Coast Guard traditions while serving their school and community. The JLP programs also focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Cadets are engaged in rich and rigorous 21st-century learning that helps prepare them for success in college and careers, and encourages the pursuit of advanced STEM careers.
JROTC and Community Service

All JROTC programs encourage cadets to get involved in their local communities. As a cadet, you will become better informed and helpful as a citizen. Your unit will perform as a team. You will be asked to help coordinate and participate in activities from car washes to candy sales for your unit. You may organize Jog-A-Thons and paper drives. Some JROTC units donate aluminum cans for recycling programs. Proceeds from these fund-raisers benefit the respective units.

Cadets also volunteer their time to support local non-profit groups like the March of Dimes and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Many join with Adopt-a-Highway Programs and the Special Olympics. Cadets have worked to clean and refurbish cemeteries. They rebuild parks and sponsor little league teams. They also work with the physically and mentally impaired, and assist veterans and the elderly.

Your unit may find itself involved in building and cleaning projects, food drives, and acquiring toys for toddlers. You may help the Salvation Army deliver holiday gifts and food baskets to the needy. You may assist flood relief victims. You may also participate in Adopt-a-Family activities and community tree planting.

One unit organized a volunteer team to help a paralyzed boy walk again by assisting with his physical therapy. Another unit worked with Multiple Sclerosis Swimming Therapy Sessions. Yet another unit helped distribute clothing and food for homeless Native Americans.

Cadets are encouraged to get involved in their local communities by volunteering.

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JROTC cadets also tutor fellow students. They provide color guards for community functions and high school sporting events. They also host and participate in summer leadership encampments and other activities.

**The Lines of Responsibility and Authority in Junior ROTC Programs**

An organization is two or more people combining their efforts to do a job. In the US Armed Forces, hundreds of thousands of men and women combine their efforts to carry out a mission essential to national security. They are able to do their jobs because they are organized to keep our nation safe.

Every Junior ROTC unit is organized to carry out its own specific mission. The main jobs for individual cadets are normally shown on an organizational chart. This is a graphic description of positions and lines of authority and responsibility in an organization or unit. Written job descriptions explain duties in the unit in detail, while the charts provide a quick view of the parts of the unit.

In Figures 1.1 through 1.5, you can see how the various military services organize their JROTC units.

You should notice that when organizing any operation, it is necessary to do three things:

1. Identify skills needed.
2. Set up a working structure.
3. Assign available resources within the structure to carry out the mission successfully.

**Organizational Structures and Charts**

As you review the displayed sample JROTC programs, note some of the differences between each of the services. This will give you a basic understanding of how each of the Armed Forces would conduct its portion of our nation's security mission. A JROTC unit’s organization normally reflects that which exists within its parent military service.

The senior JROTC instructors are responsible for the overall function and management of units. They appoint cadets for the top command and staff positions within their units. The various staff positions closely mirror those found in the staffs of their respective services.

**keys to LEADERSHIP**

While building your individual knowledge and skills as a 21st-century citizen and future leader, you also develop as a member of a team supporting the community's and nation's needs. Recognizing yourself as part of this team will make you a more successful cadet and citizen.
AFJROTC units are organized into wings (two or more groups), groups (two or more squadrons), squadrons (two or more flights), flights (two or more elements), and elements (three or more cadets, including the element leader). The Cadet Wing and Cadet Group organizations depicted are typical of units at the highest level of AFJROTC organization.
BATTALION ORGANIZATION

Battalion Commander

Battalion Executive Officer

Battalion Command Sergeant Major

Color Guard

S-1
Adjutant
Assistants

S-2
Information/Security
Assistants

S-3
Operations
Assistants

S-4
Logistics
Assistants

S-5
Special Projects
Assistants

A Company

B Company

Other Companies

1st Platoon

2nd Platoon

1st Platoon

2nd Platoon

Squad

Squad

Squad

Squad

FIGURE 1.3

US Army JROTC Organizational Chart

Courtesy of US Army JROTC
CHAPTER 1
Introduction to JROTC Programs

FIGURE 1.4
US Navy JROTC Organizational Chart
Courtesy of US Navy JROTC
FIGURE 1.5
US Marine Corps JROTC Organizational Chart
Courtesy of US Marine Corps JROTC
Cadet Appointment and Rotation

Based on how a unit is organized, the senior JROTC instructors are the final authority for appointing cadet corps commanders, subordinate commanders, and staff members, according to the written policy on appointments and rotation. When assigning cadets to positions, they consider both strengths and areas for improvement. This helps ensure cadets are assigned to positions where they will gain the most benefits.

All cadets receive permanent grades based on the number of years they have satisfactorily completed JROTC. Cadets may receive this permanent grade the second semester of each year, providing they have made satisfactory progress that year.

Satisfactory performance and behavior—as determined by the JROTC instructors—are the keys to retaining permanent grades in any cadet corps. Sometimes cadets are assigned to a position with a higher grade. As a result, the cadet may receive a temporary grade. Once the cadet has completed the duties assigned to that position, his or her grade may revert to a permanent grade. However, if the cadet is a graduating senior or third-year cadet in a three-year program, the cadet may retain the higher grade. Temporary permanent grades are an administrative option to rotate responsibility, and to avoid major imbalances in grade structure.

The rank structure provides room for continued promotions. For example, when a cadet is initially assigned to a command or staff position, the cadet does not receive the highest rank possible within those positions. This allows the cadet to assume greater responsibility and grow within that position and to be promoted based on his or her actual performance. Permanent officer status will be awarded to cadets holding officer positions for two or more grading periods.

Instructors may authorize top NCO positions to outstanding second-year cadets in three- to four-year programs. Upper class cadets in four-year programs normally outrank lower class cadets. With the exception of temporary grade assignments, cadets only hold a grade that corresponds to their current position.

Instructors may also award flight commanders with one higher grade as a motivational device to promote highly qualified and deserving cadets.

A flight commander should never outrank a squadron commander (time-in-grade or promotion line numbers should be used as a management tool when equal grades are involved). Ordinarily, a cadet serving in a staff position will be a senior NCO or officer. Promotions from cadet second lieutenant to higher grades should recognize and reward ability and effort. AFJROTC cadet rank descriptions will be discussed in the next lesson.
Using complete sentences, answer the following questions on a sheet of paper.

1. Who was Lieutenant Edgar R. Steevers, and what did he do?

2. What did the ROTC Vitalization Act of 1964 authorize?

3. What are the four things common to all JROTC programs related to cadets’ development?

4. Based on your reading, what are three main objectives of your Junior ROTC program? (Note: Cadets should answer for their chosen JROTC program.)

5. Who is responsible for the overall function and management of a Junior ROTC unit?

6. What are three things needed when organizing any JROTC operation?

7. What are the two keys to retaining permanent grades in any cadet corps?

8. When assigning cadets to staff positions, what should the instructor consider?

**APPLYING YOUR LEARNING**

9. Describe why cadets who are appointed as Flight Commanders should not hold a rank higher than a Squadron Commander.